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Cinderella and the Lost Mice

By E. C. Llopis
Illustrated by STUDIO IBOIX and Michael Inman

Random House New York

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MANUFACTURED IN CHINA
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One cold, snowy morning, Cinderella found a gift from her prince. It was a new winter coat!

"Isn't the Prince kind?" Cinderella said to Suzy the mouse. "He wants to make sure I keep warm. And the coat is so beautiful, too!"

"Nice-a! Nice-a!" Suzy nodded enthusiastically.

Just then, Gus and Jaq scampered up onto Cinderella's dressing table.

"Cinderelly! Cinderelly!" they chattered.

"Oh, Gus! Jaq!" Cinderella smiled at her friends. "It's so nice to see you, but I must find the Prince to thank him for my coat." She rushed out the door before Gus and Jaq could say anything.

Just then, the castle's cruel housekeeper entered the room. The mice scrambled to hide.

"Shoo! Shoo! You're making the whole castle dirty!" the housekeeper shouted. "I will have the gardener take all of you away!"

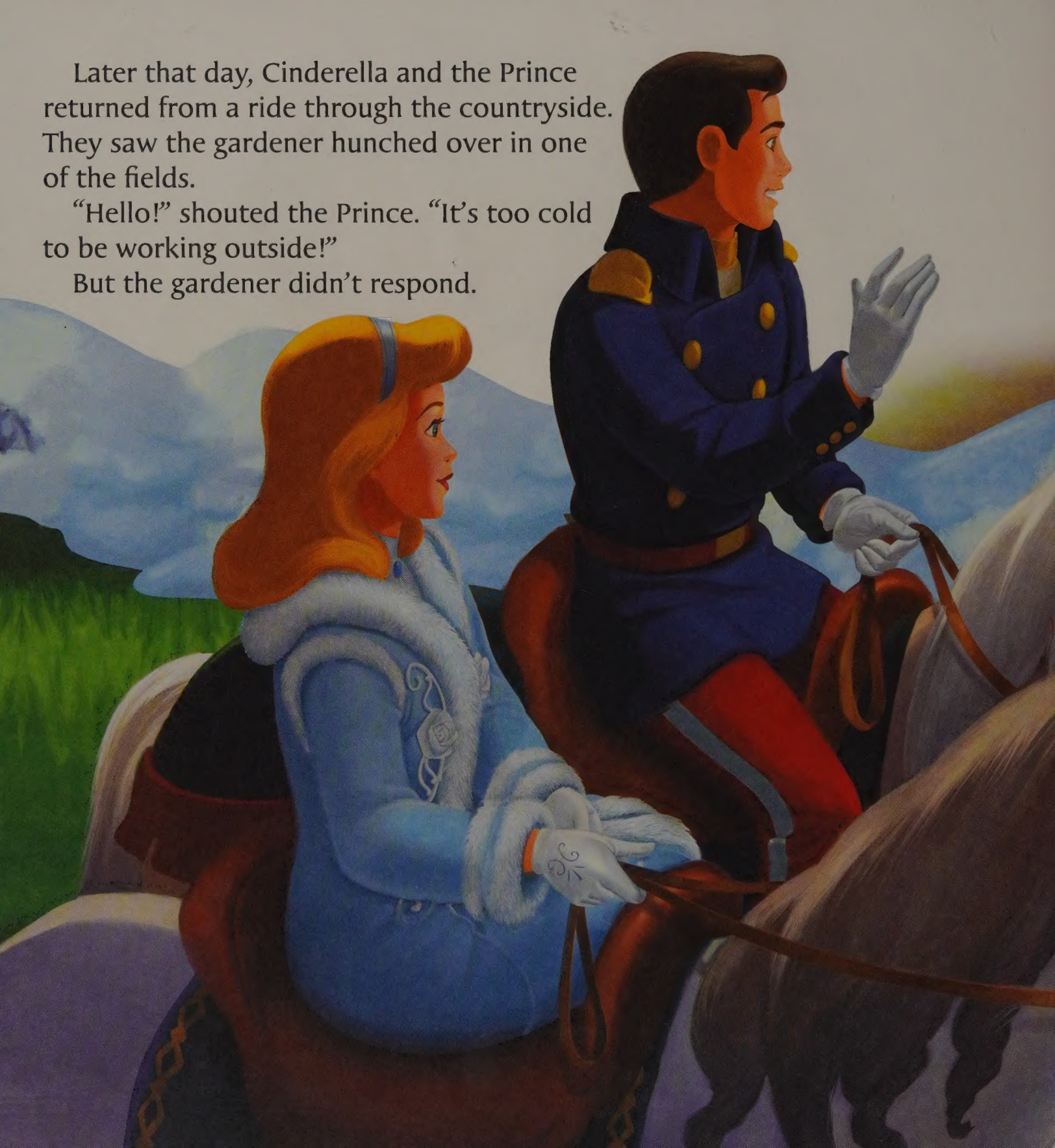
The mice really needed to talk to Cinderella about this. But the poor mice were afraid of the housekeeper and had to hide from her in the attic.

It was very cold in the attic. The mice shook and shivered.

Gus sighed. If only Cinderella knew what the mice were going through. The princess would help them for sure.

Suddenly—*wham!*—the gardener slammed cages over the mice and scooped them up!

"Now take them outside!" shrieked the housekeeper. "Take them far enough away that they never return!"



Later that day, Cinderella and the Prince returned from a ride through the countryside. They saw the gardener hunched over in one of the fields.

"Hello!" shouted the Prince. "It's too cold to be working outside!"

But the gardener didn't respond.

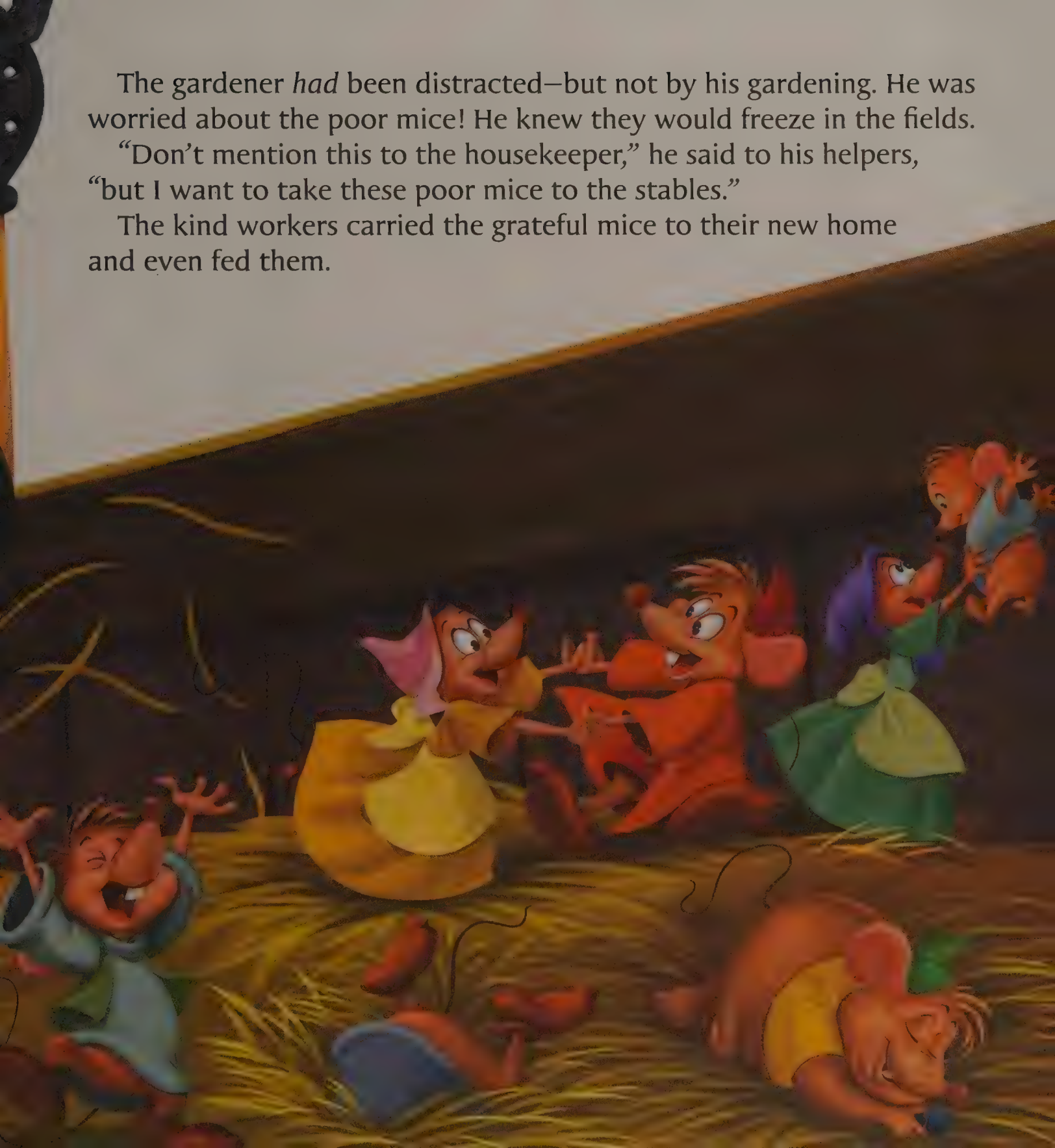
At the stables, the Prince asked, "Do you think the gardener was acting strange?"

"Perhaps he was distracted," Cinderella replied thoughtfully. "It must be hard to do much gardening when the ground is frozen."

The gardener *had* been distracted—but not by his gardening. He was worried about the poor mice! He knew they would freeze in the fields.

"Don't mention this to the housekeeper," he said to his helpers, "but I want to take these poor mice to the stables."

The kind workers carried the grateful mice to their new home and even fed them.



The mice nestled in the barn. But as night approached, it grew colder. Luckily, the horses allowed the mice to snuggle in their manes to keep warm.

"Thassa nice-a," Gus said sleepily.

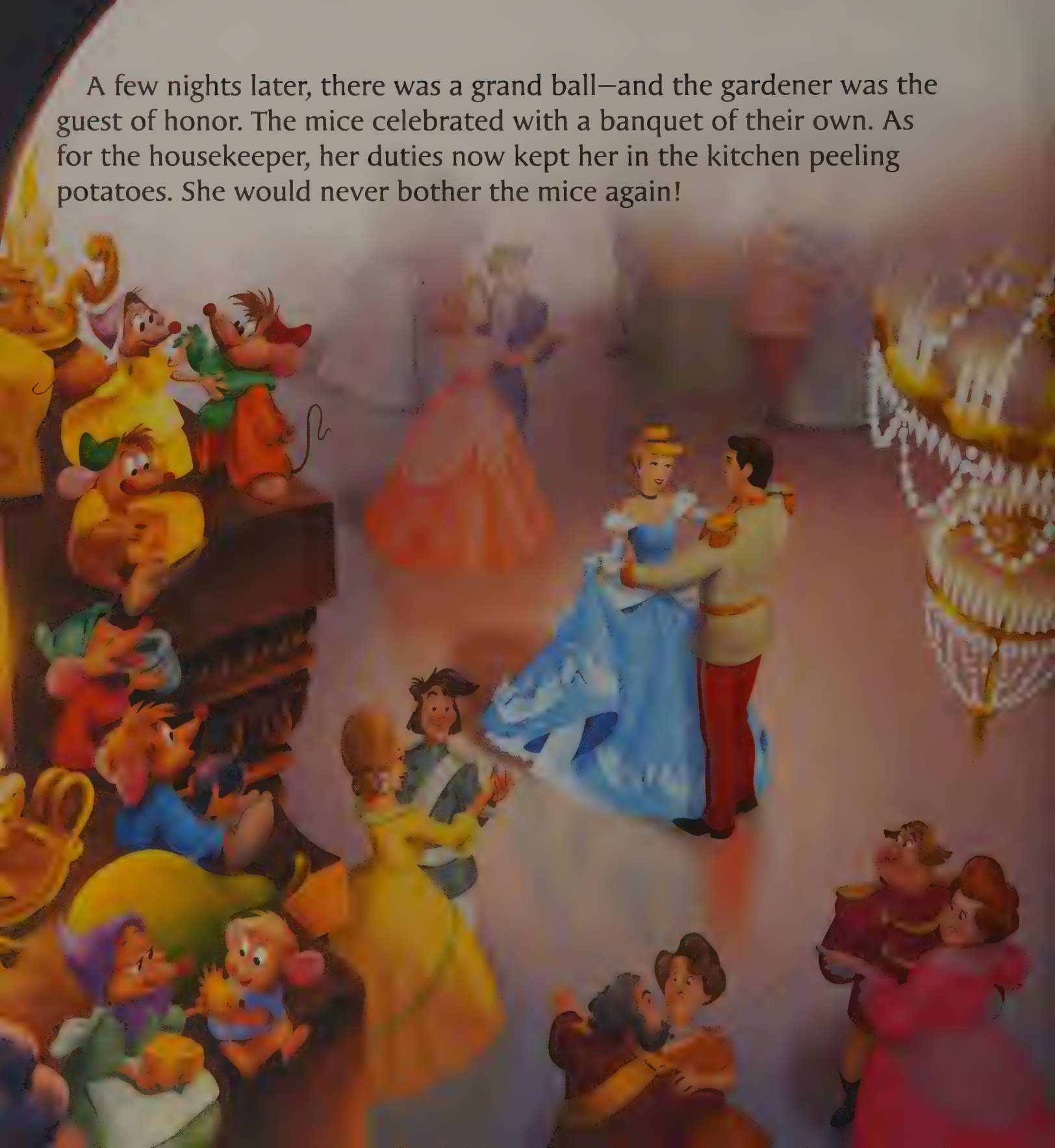
Meanwhile, the Prince told Cinderella that the housekeeper had put out her beloved mice. "This is terrible! They'll freeze!" Cinderella cried.

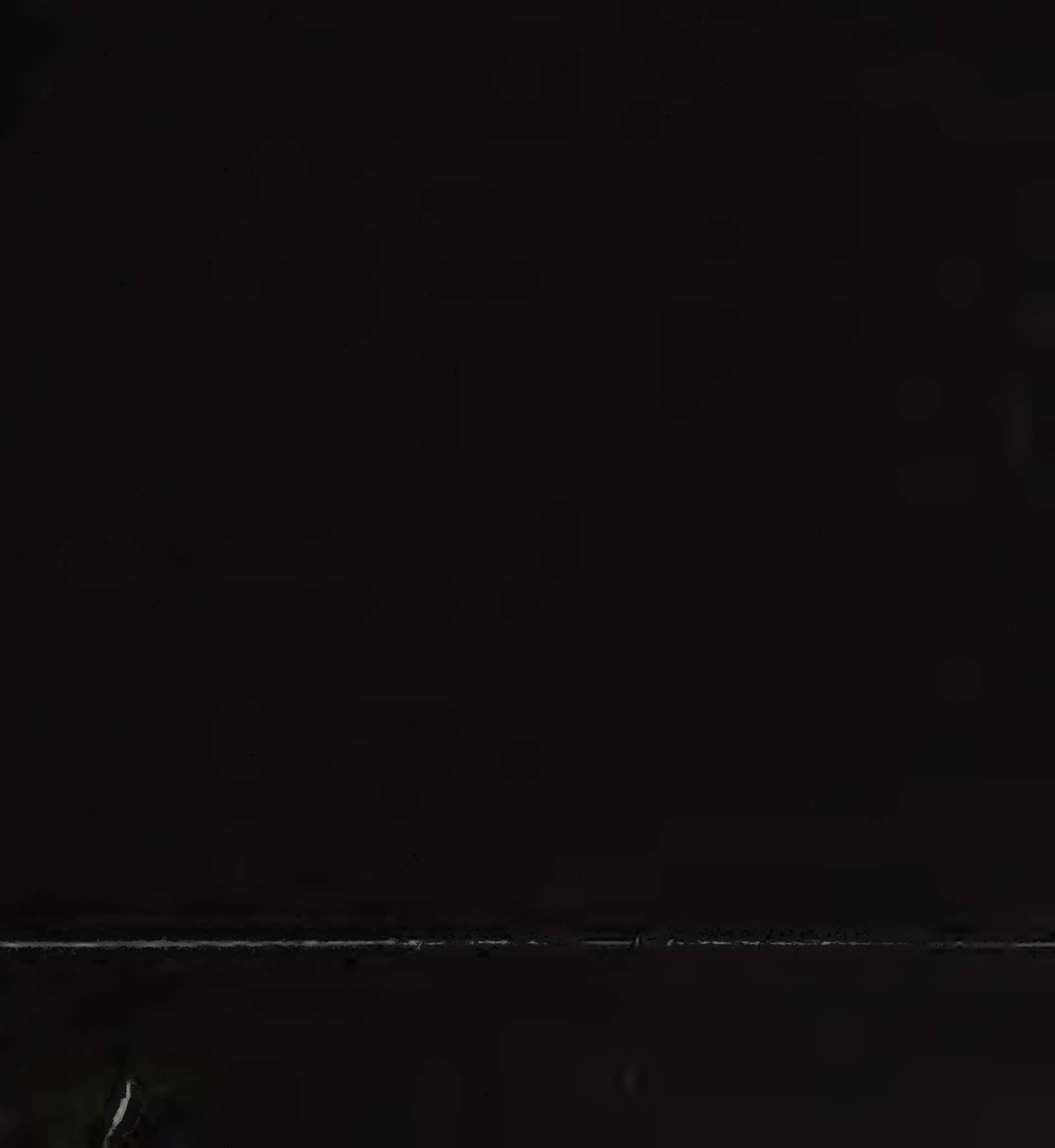
"Don't worry, my dear," the Prince replied. "The mice have found a new friend."

The Prince led Cinderella to the stables, where they found the gardener and thanked him. Then Cinderella woke the mice, who were still snuggled comfortably in the horses' manes.

"Cinderelly! Cinderelly!" the mice shouted happily.

A few nights later, there was a grand ball—and the gardener was the guest of honor. The mice celebrated with a banquet of their own. As for the housekeeper, her duties now kept her in the kitchen peeling potatoes. She would never bother the mice again!





Belle and the Castle Puppy

By Barbara Bazaldua
Illustrated by STUDIO IBOIX, Marco Colletti, and Elena Naggi

Random House New York

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One chilly day, Belle found a lost puppy by the castle gates. He was shivering and covered in mud. Belle took the puppy inside and gave him food and a warm bath.

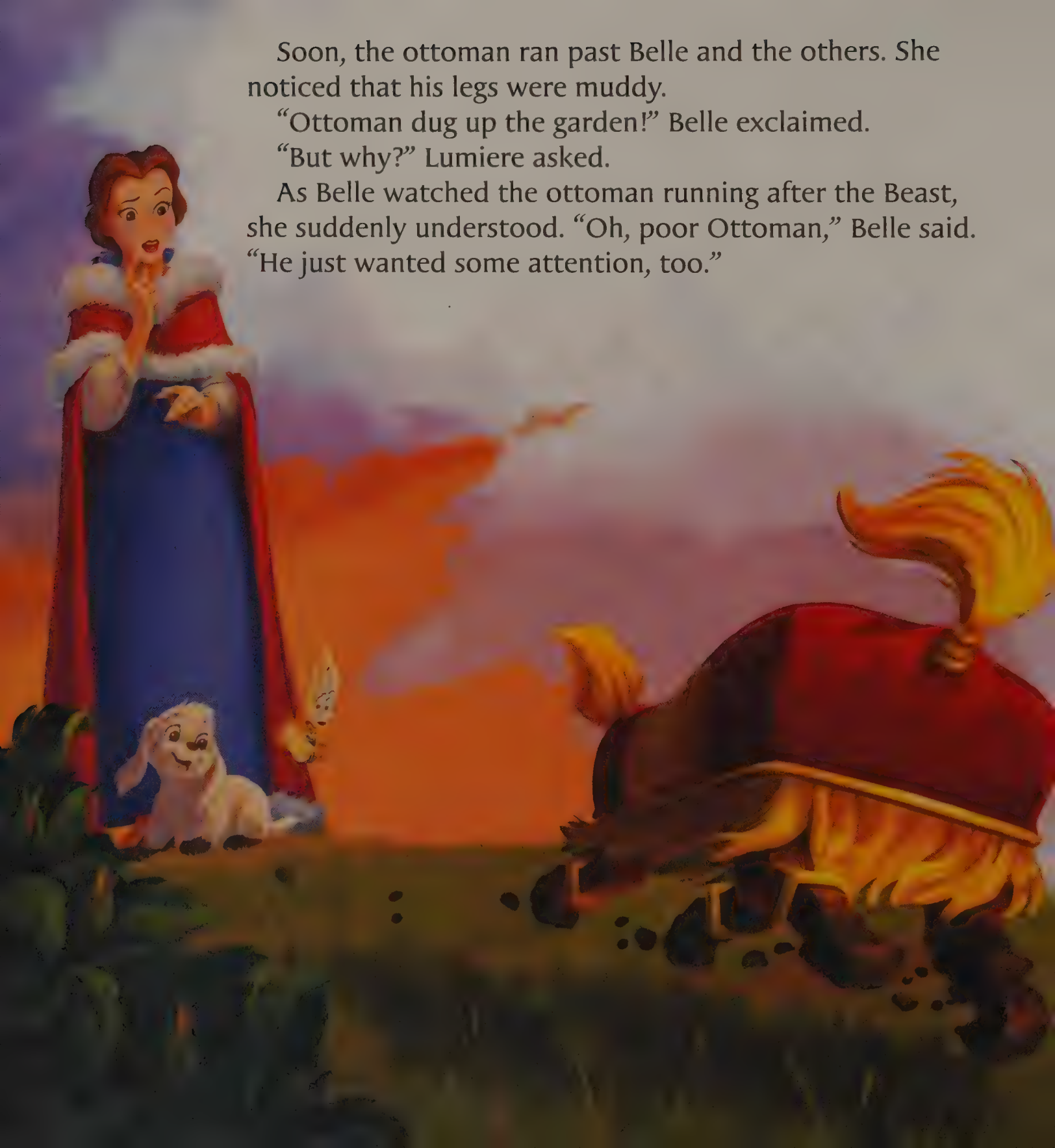
Mrs. Potts, Lumiere, and Cogsworth immediately fell in love with the puppy. "I hope we can keep him!" Chip said. But the ottoman wasn't so sure what he thought of this new visitor.

The ottoman remembered when he had been a real dog. It had been nice when people played with him. Suddenly, he wanted some attention, too! He gave a funny little *"grr"* and thumped around the kitchen. But no one noticed.

Just then, the puppy bounded to the door, barking happily. "Aww! Let's go have fun outside," Belle said.

Belle and the others went outside to play fetch with the puppy. They didn't see the ottoman wandering off alone.

Soon, the Beast appeared, clutching one of his precious rosebushes. "That puppy has dug up my roses! He must leave—NOW!" the Beast shouted as he stormed away into the forest.

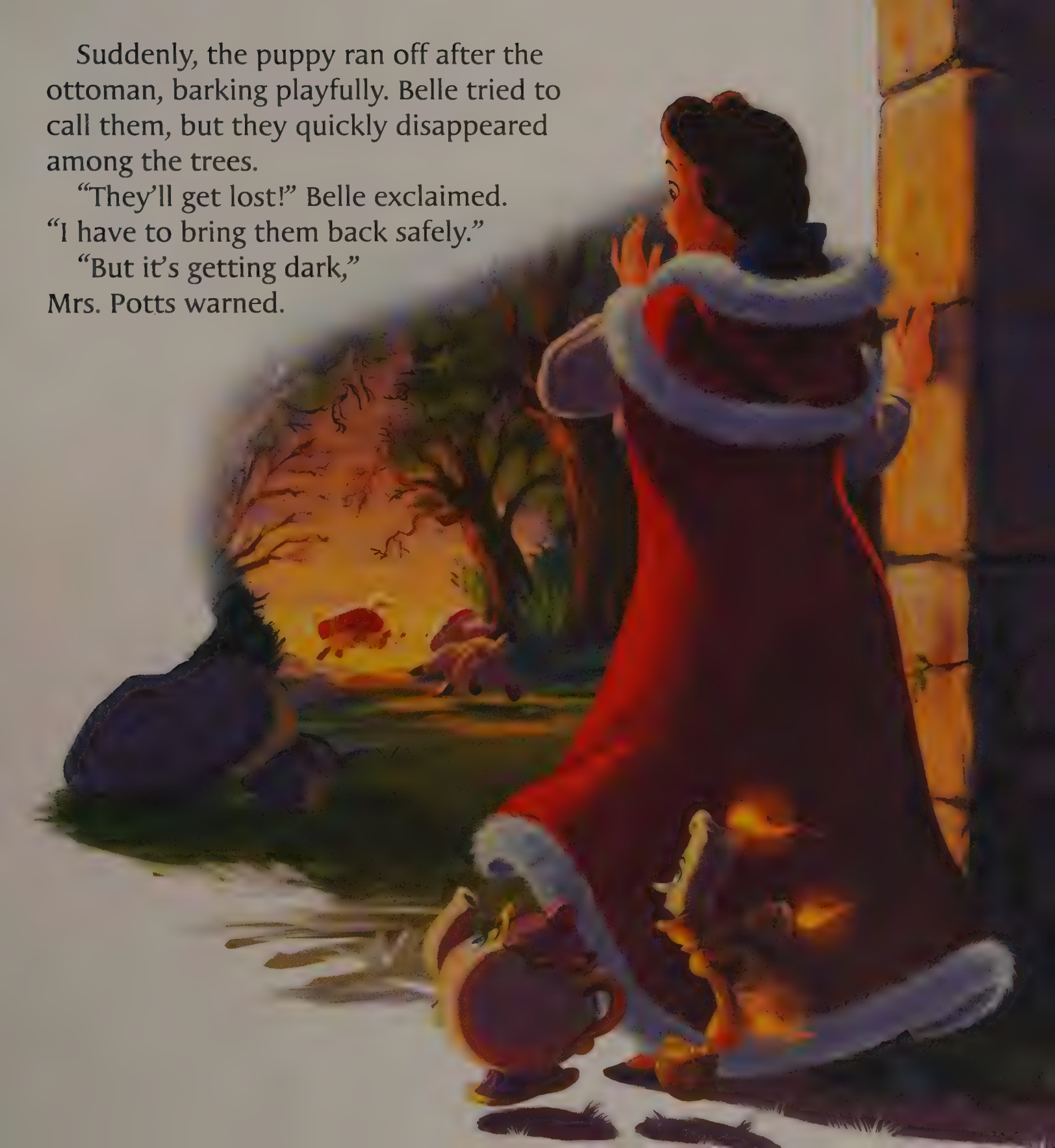


Soon, the ottoman ran past Belle and the others. She noticed that his legs were muddy.

"Ottoman dug up the garden!" Belle exclaimed.

"But why?" Lumiere asked.

As Belle watched the ottoman running after the Beast, she suddenly understood. "Oh, poor Ottoman," Belle said. "He just wanted some attention, too."



Suddenly, the puppy ran off after the ottoman, barking playfully. Belle tried to call them, but they quickly disappeared among the trees.

"They'll get lost!" Belle exclaimed. "I have to bring them back safely."

"But it's getting dark," Mrs. Potts warned.

Belle glanced nervously at the long shadows creeping through the forest. Clutching her cloak tightly, she took a deep breath and started toward the trees.

"Wait!" Lumiere called. "I'll come and light your way."

Just a few moments later, they heard ferocious barking and growling. Belle hurried toward the sound and saw the puppy and the ottoman surrounded by wolves. Quickly, Belle lit a stick with Lumiere's flame. She ran at the wolves, swinging the blazing stick at them.

"Get away! Get away!" Belle shouted.

Snarling angrily, the wolves backed away from the fire.

But then Belle tripped on a tree root. The torch flew from her hands.

"Oh, no!" she gasped.

The wolves crept toward her.

Barking fiercely, the puppy raced to the flaming stick. He snatched one end in his teeth and darted among the wolves. As the wolves backed away, the ottoman ran to Belle, yapping for her to follow him.

"The puppy's clearing the way!" Lumiere shouted to Belle. "Follow Ottoman!"

Suddenly, the Beast rushed in and the wolves scattered, yelping with fear.

"The puppy and the ottoman tried to save me!" Belle said.

"They are brave little fellows," the Beast replied. Cradling the puppy in one arm and the ottoman in the other, he led Belle to the castle.

Back at the castle, everyone settled by the fireplace. Belle watched the Beast stroke the ottoman and feed biscuits to the puppy. The gentle smile on his face made her happy.

"May the puppy stay until I can find him a proper home?" she asked.

"His home is here—with us," the Beast answered gruffly. Belle smiled, knowing that the Beast loved both of his pets dearly.

The next evening, as Belle and the Beast waltzed in the ballroom, the puppy and the ottoman proudly kept guard at the door. Both brave little pets wore shiny new badges that read PROTECTOR OF THE HOUSE.

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